



County of San Diego  
Department of Environmental Health



## **FIRE RECOVERY FOR FOOD OPERATIONS DAMAGED FOOD**

The following checklist provides information on food salvaging operations for retail food facilities after having a fire or impact from smoke or ash damage. Damaged food products must be removed from sale or use and be properly disposed.

### **CHECK CANNED GOODS FOR:**

- ☐ Any damage caused by heat or pressure.
- ☐ Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemical, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- ☐ Contact with dust, debris, or chemicals.
- ☐ Missing labels.
- ☐ Severely or sharply dented side panels of can.
- ☐ Dented lids.
- ☐ Damaged lid lips.
- ☐ Rust on lids and side seams.
- ☐ Bulging at seams, lids or sides.
- ☐ Separation at lid surfaces.
- ☐ Separation at body seams.
- ☐ Leaks or punctures.



### **CHECK BOTTLES AND JARS FOR:**

- ☐ Any damage caused by heat or pressure.
- ☐ Loose lids or caps.
- ☐ Breaks, chips, or cracks.
- ☐ Damaged or missing labels.
- ☐ Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- ☐ A foul odor upon opening container.

### **CHECK PRODUCE FOR:**

- ☐ Heat or fire damage, including ash or smoke.
- ☐ Residue or films.
- ☐ Physical damage.
- ☐ Foreign matter.
- ☐ Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- ☐ Foul odor or spoilage



## **FIRE RECOVERY FOR FOOD OPERATORS: DAMAGED FOOD (CONTINUED)**

### **CHECK PREPACKAGED FOODS AND CONTAINERS FOR:**

- ☐ Torn, ripped, or opened packaging.
- ☐ Residue or film build-up on packaging.
- ☐ Physical damage of product.
- ☐ Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- ☐ Discard products that have leaks, breaks, glass splinters, or other evidence of contamination.

### **TESTING PREPACKAGED FOODS FOR DAMAGE:**

- ☐ Select a few prepackaged items from each shelf as samples.
- ☐ Open samples and inspect for evidence of smoke, foreign matter or spoilage. Discard samples after inspection.
- ☐ If samples show evidence of contamination or product spoilage within the packaging, remove all of the packages on that shelf and hold for evaluation by a licensed food salvager.
- ☐ If samples do not show any contamination of product, but show a substance build-up that is easily cleanable, clean the remaining shelf contents using only water and paper towel. Change paper towels often.
- ☐ Continue this procedure throughout the prepackaged food section(s).

### **OTHER FOODS (needing disposal):**

- ☐ Grain and flour which is normally finely divided, but is now caked/not free flowing.
- ☐ Foil packages which show evidence of stain on the inner wrapper.
- ☐ Contaminated bulk food items must be discarded.
- ☐ Refrigerated and/or frozen foods that exceed 41°F must be discarded. Frozen foods that are kept at or below 41°F can be salvaged.

**If items are found with the types of damages listed above, they are not to be sold or given away to the public...**

#### **DO:**

- ☐ Stack damaged foods and contaminated containers in a separate area.
- ☐ Double bag spoiled food in plastic bags and place in a watertight dumpster or trash cans with tight fitting lids if there is a small quantity.
- ☐ Contact your waste disposal company to coordinate disposal and landfill arrangements. Extra dumpsters may be needed.
- ☐ Contact your insurance company on possible recovery cost of damaged food.
- ☐ Contact a licensed food salvager for evaluation and review.

#### **DO NOT:**

- ☐ Return damaged product to shelves.
- ☐ Attempt to repair damage containers.
- ☐ Replace ripped, torn, or missing labels.
- ☐ Store spoiled or damaged produce for more than 7 days.

